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ABSTRACT

The Office of Veteran Student Affairs (OVSA) at the University of South Carolina serves a total population of 3,310 veteran students. This survey, conducted during the fall semester of 1975, was designed to obtain data about the personal background of the respondents, their attitudes toward the services provided by the several offices serving veterans, their financial situation in relation to the G.I. Bill benefits, and their employment status. The target population was limited to students who were receiving benefits through their own service participation, disabled veterans, and in-service students receiving veteran's benefits. Tables list: (1) demographic information; (2) working status; (3) financial status; and (4) evaluation of services. A positive trend toward improved service for veterans is shown by the data. (Author/KE)

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Subject: A Descriptive Study of Veteran Students Attending The University of South Carolina, Fall 1975

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Introduction

The Office of Veteran Student Affairs (OVSA) at the University of South Carolina serves a total population of 3,310 veteran students. This Office provides assistance in the acquisition of G. I. Benefits for eligible veterans and facilitates the transition to college life for many of them. In a continuing effort to assess the quality and effectiveness of the services offered, the OVSA conducted the following survey during the Fall Semester of 1975. The survey questionnaire was designed to obtain data about the personal background of the respondents, their attitudes toward the services provided by the several offices serving veterans, their financial situation in relation to the G. I. Bill benefits, and their employment status. This survey was similar to one conducted during the Fall Semester, 1973. Questions related to veterans reaction to delay in receipt of benefits, help in receiving benefits, and information acquisition were repeated in the 1975 survey to determine perceptible trends in service to veterans.

The target population for the veteran study was limited to those students who were receiving benefits through their own service participation, disabled veterans, and in-service students receiving veteran's benefits. Dependents of veterans and those veterans receiving veteran's benefits from their parent's service were not included. One final criteria for the determination of the target population was on the basis of one-half time or more attempted credit hours. There were 2,234 veteran students identified in this population.

A random sample of 500 students was chosen to participate in the survey and the questionnaires were mailed on November 7, 1975, with a cover letter and a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope. Responses were accepted through December 3, 1975, a four-week response period. The usable responses numbered 155, 31% of the sample and 7% of the population.

Findings

The data listed in the following tables is by the percentage of response to each item included in the survey. A summary of comments and conclusions are offered following these tables.

Table 1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

A. Age:

Years	Frequency
23-25	17.9
26-28	45.0
29-33	17.2
34 or older	23.8

B. Sex:

Male	94.6
Female	5.4

C. Marital Status:

Single	22.7
Married	76.0
Other	1.3

D. Classification:

Fresh	10.0
Soph	11.3
Junior	15.3
Senior	18.7
Grad	38.7
Law	6.0

E. Housing:

Off Campus	84.3
USC Residence Hall	5.9
USC Married Student Housing	8.5
At Home with Parents	1.3

F. Residency:

South Carolina	83.8
Out-of-State	16.2

Table 2. WORKING STATUS

A. It is necessary that I work in order to continue school.

Yes	66.2
No	33.8

B. At present I am working

Full time	34.9
Part time	36.9
Not employed	28.2

C. I am working

On Campus	25.9
Off Campus	74.1

D. At present I work the following number of hours per week:

10 or less	11.3
10-20 hrs.	25.5
20-39 hrs.	26.4
40 or more	36.8

E. Presently working under College Work Study program

Yes	5.6
No	94.4

F. My work schedule includes mostly:

Weekdays	67.3
Weeknights	9.6
Other	23.1

G. For married students, my spouse is working.

Yes	72.4
No	27.6

Full time	83.7
Part time	16.3

Table 3. FINANCIAL STATUS

A. I feel that the G. I. Bill alone is adequate to meet my financial needs.

Yes	17.1
No	82.9

B. I am attending school on the G. I. Bill mainly as a supplemental income.

Yes	43.9
No	56.1

C. Generally my financial needs are adequately met.

Yes	70.7
No	29.3

D. I receive the following grants or loans to help with college.

BEOG	1.9
LEEP	1.9
NDSL	1.3
SEOG	.0
Academic Scholarship	1.9
Guaranteed Loan	9.0

Table 4. EVALUATION OF SERVICES

A. I find it difficult to understand the particular function of each of the three veteran offices.

Yes	57.8
No	42.2

B. I have used the following veterans services often or sometimes since coming to Carolina.

	Yes	No
Veteran Student Affairs	44.8	52.2
Veteran Records Office	76.3	23.6
Veteran Representative	42.0	58.0

C. The service that I have received from each of the following offices has been helpful.

	Helpful	Not Helpful
Veteran Student Affairs	74.7	25.3
Veteran Records Office	86.9	13.1
Veteran Representative	71.0	29.0

D. In problem solving, I feel the following offices have been effective or somewhat effective.

	Effective	Not Effective
Veteran Student Affairs	73.3	26.7
Veteran Records Office	86.8	13.2
Veteran Representative	72.8	27.2

E. It has been difficult to receive the necessary help I need since the veteran offices are physically separated on campus.

Yes	24.3
No	75.7

F. I have had adequate help on campus in receiving my G. I. Benefits.

Yes	82.4
No	17.6

G. My G. I. Benefits have come through without unusual delay.

Yes	74.8
No	25.2

H. Because of a lack of help on campus, I have had to seek help off campus.

Yes	16.2
No	83.8

I. I have difficulty in acquiring information on campus that pertains to my being a veteran.

Yes	18.9
No	81.1

J. In receiving information about veterans benefits, services, and programs, the degree of helpfulness is as follows:

Carolina Veterans Newsletter	82.4
Gamecock	77.4
Department Bulletin Board	44.2
Veteran Office Bulletin Board	30.4
Russell House Bulletin Board	30.3

K. I have made use of the following veteran's services since coming to Carolina.

Evaluation of Military Credits	7.7
VA Tutorial Assistance	5.8
VA Work Study	4.5
Veteran Orientation	3.9
VA Student Loan	2.6
Veteran College Prep	1.3

L. I think it is very or somewhat important that services and programs be designed specifically for veteran students.

Yes	86.0
No	14.9

M. Rank in order of importance the activities you would support. (Listed in order of first place selection)

Career Placement Workshop	25.9
VA Benefit Seminar	24.7
Resume Writing	16.6
Personal Finance Seminar	12.8
VA Home Loan Seminar	11.1
Political Action	9.0
Social	0.0

N. I feel it is very or somewhat important that an organization such as Carolina Veterans Club be established on campus.

Yes	74.5
No	25.5

O. I would actively support a Veterans Club.

Yes	60.0
No	40.0

P. During the Spring or Fall Semesters last year, I received issues of the CV Newsletter.

Yes	83.1
No	16.9

Q. The CV Newsletter has been helpful to me.

Yes	76.2
No	23.8

SUMMARY

Nearly one-half of all veterans attending the University vary in age from 26-28 years. They are mostly married males, residents of South Carolina, and living off-campus. Somewhat more than one-half of the veterans are undergraduates while the others are attending the Graduate and Law Schools.

Veterans find it necessary to work in order to continue in school with most working at least part time or full time. They feel the G. I. Bill alone is not adequate to meet financial needs although, in general, most feel that financial needs are being met. Little use is made of grants or loans to supplement college expenses with most students relying upon the G. I. Bill to supplement their college expenses.

There is significant use of the various offices to serve veterans with apparent helpfulness and effectiveness in solving veteran's problems. There appeared to be some lack of understanding as to the particular functions of each of the three offices.

In general veterans are receiving VA checks without unusual delay, rarely seeking off-campus aid to solve their problems. They do indicate that adequate help has been available to them on campus.

In evaluating the various sources for receiving information, respondents indicated that the Carolina Veteran Newsletter, especially designed for and distributed to veterans, was the most helpful. Nearly all the veterans had received copies of the Newsletter and most had found it helpful. Other major information sources were the use of the Gamecock and the use of department bulletin boards.

Of the services and programs offered, the veteran has taken advantage of the evaluation of military credit more than any other. The VA Work-Study Program and Tutorial Program were used less frequently. The most frequently requested services and programs were career placement, resume writing, as well as VA Benefits Seminars. More than one-half of the veterans surveyed indicated that it was important that services be designed especially for the veteran student.

CONCLUSIONS

1. A positive trend toward improved service for veterans is apparent according to survey data. In the survey of November 1973 only 63% of the veterans felt they had adequate help on campus in receiving G. I. Benefits. This has increased to more than 82% in 1975 who now feel they receive adequate help on campus. In 1973 approximately 66% of the veterans indicated G. I. Benefits came through without unusual delay. This has increased according to 1975 data to 75% who now indicate benefits have come through without unusual delay. The advent of the Veterans Cost-of-Instruction Program and the Vet Rep on Campus along with the combining of offices to serve veterans will hopefully continue to contribute to veterans success in obtaining benefits that are available to them.
2. The difficulty veterans have in acquiring information on campus is on the decline. The percentage of veterans who responded that they had difficulty in acquiring information dropped from 26% in 1973 to only 19% in 1975. The major source of information to veterans is the "CV"

Newsletter, published on the average of three times per semester. Reaction has been favorable with 76% responding that the letter has been helpful to them. Continued support should be given to this effort of communication.

3. Interest in activities specifically designed for veterans received favorable reaction with 86% indicating that it was very or somewhat important. Several services and programs were listed and respondents were asked to rank the order of importance of these activities. Career placement and VA Benefit information were ranked the highest. Each of these areas should merit our attention in the future planning of programs for veterans.